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GEOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

CIA/RR GM 62-I
February 1962

THE BERLIN WALL



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS

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THE BERLIN WALL

The Berlin wall is now a fact of life. It has and will continue to have fundamental influences on the everyday life of Berliners and on East-West negotiations concerned with the city and issues related to it. The purpose of this report is to describe the wall as it stands today to provide a framework for evaluating incoming intelligence. The timeliness of this report is to describe the wall as it stands today to provide a framework for evaluating incoming intelligence. The timeliness of this report is to describe the wall as it stands today to provide a framework for evaluating incoming intelligence.

Even before 13 August 1961, all streets that crossed the border were blocked as to vehicular traffic or were under surveillance by East German Police. Vehicular traffic was checked but restriction on pedestrians was limited to an occasional spot check. The 2-Bahn (German electric railroad) and the 1-Bahn (underground electric railroad) also crossed the border at several points. Although there were facilities for inspection and control of traffic, such restrictions as were applied were relatively ineffective, as the number of refugees increased.

The sealing of crossing points between East and West Berlin began before daylight on 13 August 1961. Initially, the methods and material used were fairly crude and expeditious. Beginning about 12 August, however, more permanent barriers were erected at a few points and later at others, and the border began to take on more of the characteristics of a real wall. Mayor Brandt made the first public reference to the border barriers as a "wall" in his speech to the Bundestag on 12 August, when he compared it to the "Great Wall of China". On 14 September the *Spedition Wilhelmshafen* referred to the barriers as "The Wall of Shame". The title was adopted readily and has been used frequently since that time.

At first, several of the crossing points along the border were blocked by a single roll of concertina barbed wire stretched across the street and situated as the need to heighten or setting walls of fences. These points were blocked merely by running a section of the cobblestone street and placing the concertina barbed wire in layers in front of the excavation. In all other places the two methods were combined. Subsequently, concrete and wooden posts were increased and wire fencing was attached. Later, concrete slabs and stone construction began to appear at various points along the wall, and windows and doors of buildings on the border were sealed. Gradually, the hastily constructed expedients began to assume the character of the obstacles now commonly called the "wall".

The sealing wall and its rigid controls prompted several dramatic escapes by crawling through the barriers. The East German authorities responded by restoring the destroyed portions and tightening security along the wall. Such efforts did not reduce appreciably the number of break-throughs, and in 19 November another mass construction effort was organized and barriers across

likely avenues of escape were reinforced. A final crescendo of activity was reached on the evening of 3 December, when the East Germans commenced work at Friedrichstrasse and other crossing points, strengthening the walls, adding traffic mazes, installing tank barriers, and narrowing the passageways for vehicles and pedestrians. Throughout the entire process of sealing off the border, many residents living near the border were evacuated; homes and garden houses were destroyed; and a cleared area was established to provide the border guards with more effective fields of observation and fire.

Concurrent with the sealing of the border between sectors, the East German authorities tightened security along the sector/sector boundary. Double wire fences, plowed strips, watch towers, and bunkers were constructed, and residents were evacuated. The borders of West Berlin are now as tightly, if not more tightly, sealed as the international boundaries along the Iron Curtain.

Characteristics of the Wall

The popular designation of the entire barrier system along the sector border as "the wall" has created some false impressions. Actually, the wall is a system of barriers and obstructions of many different types, and a single, uniform feature. Throughout its entire length of 43 kilometers (about 26 1/2 miles), it is closely paralleled but does not always coincide with the sector boundary. For about 20 kilometers or 65 percent of its length the wall traverses areas that were built up on one or both sides. It is in the middle section that most of the masonry wall has been built. The rest of the border consists of multiple fences of barbed wire or wire netting, which in many places follow such preexisting barriers to east-west movement as canals or railway embankments. The main wall is generally reinforced by armed guards and secondary obstructions such as more masonry, tank barriers, belts of turn-up pavement, cleared strips, and observation posts. Here and there, some fences of light construction seem to have been erected, mainly to cut off visual contact between East and West Berliners. Action on the announced plan to clear a strip 100 meters wide along the border has for the most part been limited to the suburban areas at either end of the border, where the clearing has confined mainly of removing orchards, gardens, tool sheds, and a relatively small number of private homes.

In the heart of the city the wall consists almost entirely of masonry or the so-called facade of buildings. This stretch, about 13-1/2 kilometers long, extends from just south of Brandenburger Strasse to Schillingstrasse, except for about 1-1/2 kilometers where the water barriers forming the boundary are paralleled by barbed-wire fences.

The strongest part of the wall is at the Brandenburger Gate. Here pre-fabricated concrete slabs have been arranged in layers forming a wall 7 feet high and 6 feet thick with reinforced steel posts. To the north and south of the Brandenburg Gate, the masonry wall is made of prefabricated concrete slabs about 1 foot thick. At sharp curves and advanced corners, smaller concrete blocks are used, which are also used to add extra height to parts of the wall. In most places the wall averages 8 feet high, but along Brandenburger Strasse parts of it are 10 feet high, and along the French cemetery, even higher. Generally the wall is topped by 7-milimeter iron rods strung with barbed wire. Freely visible, the wall has been built as primary barriers in those areas of the city where they were conveniently situated and suitably constructed. Barbed wire only, in some cases, broken glass have been added. Masonry barriers also extend for about 4.3 kilometers along the western edge of Tempel and for an almost equal length around the VEB Hermann-Döring plant in Wilhelmshafen.

Wood blocks now wall off all but 7 of the 30 former border-crossing points. At these authorized crossing points, obstructions have been placed across the road, forming a maze with relatively narrow openings to facilitate control of vehicular traffic.

Tank barriers consisting of heavy steel tripods anchored in the road with cement back up the masonry wall at several places. The stretch of tank barriers runs from Voss Strasse south of the Buldinghaus to Rosenstrasse. Others are located on Zimmerstrasse at Wilhelm Strasse and at Friedrichstrasse, on Scheunstrasse, and along the 2-Bahn tracks between Wilhelmshafen and Schöten.

Wherever the border in Berlin follows along waterways (a total of 13.3 kilometers), the barrier characteristics of the waterway have been exploited, and have been reinforced on one or both banks by barbed-wire fences and in places by stone walls. Stationary or mobile guard posts provide additional reinforcement. Railroad lines and yards, which parallel the intensity border for about 10.3 kilometers, have barbed-wire fences on one or both sides. In some places rail embankments also have been exploited as barriers.

There is considerable variety in the way fences are employed as barriers. In some places they are the primary obstacle; in other places they are subsidiary obstacles. The barbed-wire fences consist of 6 to 8 strands of heavy barbed wire strung on sturdy reinforced concrete posts. In many places they are erected in a system of 2, 3, or 4 parallel fences, 6 to 7 feet high, the wire along the fence may be lighted at night. In other places, double-link fences are topped by barbed wire. Barbed-wire coils are now used to back up primary barriers.

In the suburbs, cleared areas have been established to permit better control of the barriers. Former garden colonies -- such as Schöten, Mahls, Spottelsdorf, Grunow, and An der Gabel -- have been cleared of trees, tool sheds, or anything else that might obstruct the view from the observation towers.

All these physical barriers are patrolled by a large complement of Soviet and East German security personnel. The guards are disposed in both stationary and mobile units. Stationary posts include a number of observation posts at strategic points, particularly in suburban areas and in rural areas. Within the inner city, observation posts are also located on the top floors of some buildings. At East German observation post has even been established on the facade of the Church of the Ascension. Other stationary posts guard sensitive and vulnerable areas, primarily street intersections. Mobile guards patrol the barriers. Their mobility -- the uncertainty as to their location at any given moment -- provides the physical barriers with additional security.

By virtue of the wall, the sector boundary has acquired the aura of an international boundary without a doubt in its legal status. It functions effectively and is now almost as much a part of the Iron Curtain as any of the formerly recognized international boundaries dividing East from West. The recent erection of buildings at several crossing points, presumably to mark the implementation of the new East German controls, has not finally clarified, in another step in the direction of making the sector boundary function as an international boundary.

APPROXIMATE BORDER CROSSING POINTS*

NUMBER OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND CONSULATES FENCES ONLY	ADDITIONAL CROSSING POINTS OF 13 OTHER NEW CROSSINGS
APPROXIMATE	APPROXIMATE
WEST GERMANY ONLY	WEST GERMANY ONLY
Bundesministerium	Bundesministerium
Bundeskanzleramt	Bundeskanzleramt
Bundesrat	Bundesrat
WEST GERMANY ONLY	WEST GERMANY ONLY
Bundesministerium	Bundesministerium
Bundeskanzleramt	Bundeskanzleramt
Bundesrat	Bundesrat

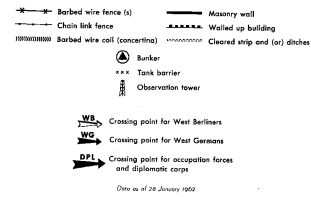
* Authorized East German and West Berliners presumably can cross at any border points still open.

See map on reverse side

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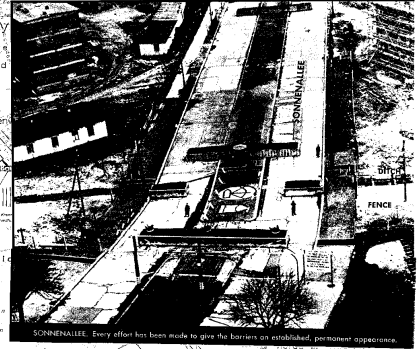
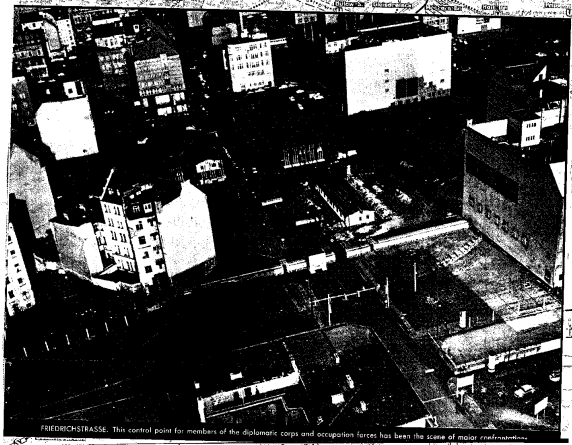
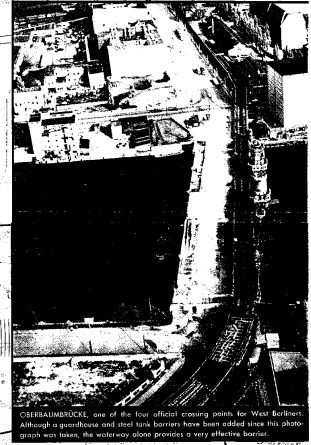
BERLIN



Base map-AMS 1:25,000 series M941 1st ed.
Scale probably precise representation of the wall.

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KOPENHAGNER STRASSE. Here, as at a number of other places where the railroad runs along the border, but is actually on the West Berlin side of it, an unofficial multinational boundary is in operation. The presence of West Berlin police on the street below the railroad and East German transport police above demonstrates the difficulties of boundary administration.



OBSERVATION TOWERS ALONG THE SECTOR BORDER BETWEEN EAST AND WEST BERLIN

- Between Blankenfelder Chaussee and Schildower Weg (Lubars) (25 Nov. 1961).
- At the curve in Hauptstrasse in Rosenthal 600m from the sector boundary.
- In the factory area of VEB Bergmann-Röntig northwest of S-Bahnhof Wilhelmsruh there are 4 towers. (2 are old, the third was put up about 3 Oct. 1961, the 4th was put up about 21 Nov. 1961).
- Just southeast of the S-Bahnhof Wallackschtrasse (12 Dec. 1961).
- In the cemetery 200m north of Sandkühnstrasse (5 Nov. 1961).
- On the drainage canal between Fraienhof and Treptower Brücke (15 Nov. 1961).
- At Treptower Brücke (17 Nov. 1961).
- Lahnshöfenplatz (28 Nov. 1961).
- Treptow the corner of Heidelberger Strasse (5 Dec. 1961).
- Hofen Britz (9 Sept. 1961).
- Between Massowen Brücke and Ernst Koller Brücke about 400m from the Yellow Canal. (11 Jan. 1960).
- 300m north of Massowen Brücke (15 Dec. 1961).
- Near Dankmarnstrasse opposite the US Army Installation in Rudow (Sept. 1961).
- 500 northeast of the junction of Deutschdörfel Strasse with the sector boundary (Rudow). (12 Sept. 1961).

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30 MAR 1962

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29 March 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR:



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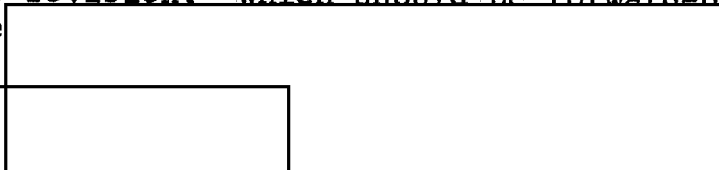
SUBJECT:

ORR Study of Berlin Wall

1. Several weeks ago an ORR Geographic Study of the Berlin Wall was received by the Berlin Task Force and greatly appreciated. At the time the Task Force requested an updating of this study and its reissue classified no higher than "Official Use Only" if at all possible. Distribution by the Task Force both in the U.S. and to members of the Quadripartite Subgroups would thereby be possible. *GM 62-1*

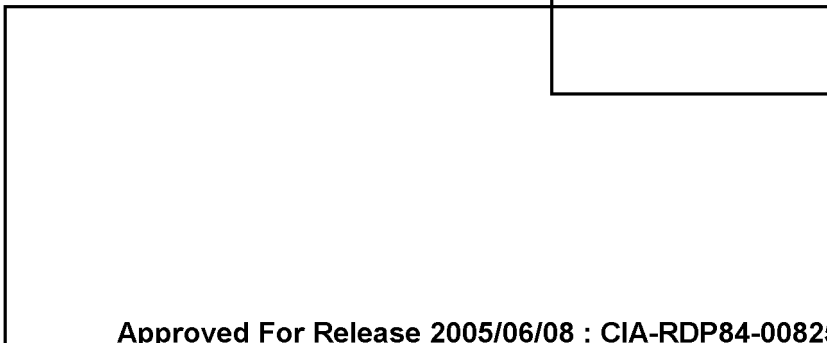
2. I would like therefore to request that a second edition of the Study on the Berlin wall be made, to include information up to 31 March. The map information should be brought up to date and completed. The text should be omitted or should cover only such matters as would be of particular interest to persons who have been working for some time on the Berlin problem. (The text of the original edition was a good introduction to the Berlin wall but not particularly needed by persons who have been working on the problem.) Photographs, if any, should also be brought up to date or, if anything, made more numerous in lieu of text. *PX/ 63,200.5*

3. I would appreciate being notified of an approximate completion date for this revision, which should be forwarded to the Berlin Task Force



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Geography Division, ORR

Project Initiation Memorandum

Project No.: 63.2005

3 April 1962

1. Subject of Proposed Project: The Berlin Wall
2. Statement of Problem: A layout including a map of the East-West Berlin sector border and photographs of critical points, together with explanatory text, to be published. The object is to update the information contained in CIA/RR GM 62-1 to 31 March or later. This would not be a Geographic Intelligence Memorandum, however, and textual material will be held to a minimum.

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3. Requester: Berlin Task Force,

4. Responsible Analyst: GG/E

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5. Kind and Extent of Cooperation Desired From:

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6. Estimated Manhours in D/GG: 40
7. Probable Completion Date: 4 May 1962
8. Probable Form of Final Publication: CIA/RR GPM
9. Recommendations for Distribution of Finished Report: To requester and recipients of GM 62-1.
10. Comments: Classification to be no higher than For Official Use Only.

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Acting Chief, Geography Division

Approved:

File with GM 62-1

Chief, Geographic Research

Date

Date

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2nd page